

IN THE CLAIMS:

20 (currently amended): An earthquake-immune exterior wall system for use with a multi-story building structure, the wall system comprising:

a plurality of exterior wall panels;

a plurality of structural connectors, each ~~operatively~~ associated with one of the exterior wall panels for structurally coupling the associated exterior wall panel to the building structure for a single story of the multi-story building structure so that a plurality of the exterior wall panels are structurally coupled to each of multiple adjacent stories of the multi-story building structure; and

a plurality of elongate seismic decoupler joints each comprising the sole connection between the exterior wall panels on any one story to the exterior wall panels on an adjacent story of the multi-story building structure, each seismic decoupler joint being of one piece and spanning an entire width of the any one story and being mechanically interlocked to the exterior wall panels, the decoupler joints permitting free in-plane, out-of-plane, and vertical interstory movement of the exterior wall panels on any one story relative to the exterior wall panels on an adjacent story of the multi-story building structure so that loads are not transferred between the exterior wall panels on any one story to the exterior wall panels on an adjacent story of the multi-story building structure if the building structure undergoes swaying motion.

21 (previously presented): The wall system of claim 20 wherein each elongate seismic decoupler joint comprises a continuous, flexible gasket.

22 (currently amended): An earthquake-immune exterior ~~The wall system of claim 20~~ for use with a multi-story building structure, the wall system comprising:

a plurality of exterior wall panels;

a plurality of structural connectors, each associated with one of the exterior wall panels for structurally coupling the associated exterior wall panel to the building structure for a single story of the multi-story building structure so that a plurality of the exterior wall panels are structurally coupled to each of multiple adjacent stories of the multi-story building structure; and

a plurality of elongate seismic decoupler joints each comprising the sole connection between the exterior wall panels on any one story to the exterior wall panels on an adjacent story of the multi-story building structure, the decoupler joints permitting free in-plane, out-of-plane, and vertical interstory movement of the exterior wall panels on any one story relative to the exterior wall panels on an adjacent story of the multi-story building structure so that loads are not transferred between the exterior wall panels on any one story to the exterior wall panels on an adjacent story of the multi-story building structure if the building structure undergoes swaying motion, wherein each elongate seismic decoupler joint comprises a pair of continuous, flexible gaskets, one positioned at a front of the exterior wall panels and the other positioned at a rear of the exterior wall panels.

23 (previously presented): The wall system of claim 20 wherein each elongate seismic decoupler joint is removably securable between the exterior wall panels.

24 (previously presented): The wall system of claim 20 wherein each elongate seismic decoupler joint comprises an elongate central portion connected between opposite elongate locking portions, the locking portions for connection to the exterior wall panels.

25 (currently amended): An earthquake-immune exterior ~~The wall system of~~
~~claim 23~~ for use with a multi-story building structure, the wall system comprising:

a plurality of exterior wall panels;

a plurality of structural connectors, each associated with one of the exterior wall panels for structurally coupling the associated exterior wall panel to the building structure for a single story of the multi-story building structure so that a plurality of the exterior wall panels are structurally coupled to each of multiple adjacent stories of the multi-story building structure; and

a plurality of elongate seismic decoupler joints each comprising the sole connection between the exterior wall panels on any one story to the exterior wall panels on an adjacent story of the multi-story building structure, the decoupler joints permitting free in-plane, out-of-plane, and vertical interstory movement of the exterior wall panels on any one story relative to the exterior wall panels on an adjacent story of the multi-story building structure so that loads are not transferred between the exterior wall panels on any one story to the exterior wall panels on an adjacent story of the multi-story building structure if the building structure

undergoes swaying motion, wherein each elongate seismic decoupler joint comprises an elongate central portion connected between opposite elongate locking portions, the locking portions for connection to the exterior wall panels and wherein the central portion is generally flat in a natural state and is rolled into position to provide a U-shape between the exterior wall panels, in use.

26 (previously presented): The wall system of claim 20 wherein the exterior wall panels comprise precast concrete cladding panels.

27 (previously presented): The wall system of claim 20 wherein the exterior wall panels comprise stone cladding panels.

28 (previously presented): The wall system of claim 20 wherein the exterior wall panels comprise glass panels

29 (previously presented): The wall system of claim 20 wherein the structural connectors comprise anchor frames.

30 (previously presented): The wall system of claim 20 wherein the exterior wall panels comprise curtain wall panel frames supporting exterior cladding panels.

31 (previously presented): The wall system of claim 20 further comprising an elongate rotation-accommodating face cap operatively secured to a bottom edge of each of the exterior wall panels overlying the seismic decoupler joint.

32 (currently amended): An earthquake-immune exterior ~~The~~ wall system of ~~claim 30~~ for use with a multi-story building structure, the wall system comprising:

a plurality of exterior wall panels;

a plurality of structural connectors, each associated with one of the exterior wall panels for structurally coupling the associated exterior wall panel to the building structure for a single story of the multi-story building structure so that a plurality of the exterior wall panels are structurally coupled to each of multiple adjacent stories of the multi-story building structure;

a plurality of elongate seismic decoupler joints each comprising the sole connection between the exterior wall panels on any one story to the exterior wall panels on an adjacent story of the multi-story building structure, the decoupler joints permitting free in-plane, out-of-plane, and vertical interstory movement of the exterior wall panels on any one story relative to the exterior wall panels on an adjacent story of the multi-story building structure so that loads are not transferred between the exterior wall panels on any one story to the exterior wall panels on an adjacent story of the multi-story building structure if the building structure undergoes swaying motion; and

an elongate rotation-accommodating face cap operatively secured to a bottom edge of each of the exterior wall panels overlying the seismic decoupler joint wherein each face cap is hingedly connected to the bottom edge of the one of the exterior wall panels.

33 (previously presented): The wall system of claim 20 wherein each elongate seismic decoupler joint comprises an elongate flexible planar element rolled between the exterior

wall panels permitting free in-plane, out-of-plane, and vertical interstory movement of the exterior wall panels.

34 (currently amended): An earthquake-immune exterior wall system for use with a multi-story building structure, the wall system comprising:

a plurality of exterior wall panels;

a plurality of structural connectors, each ~~operatively~~ associated with one of the exterior wall panels for structurally coupling the associated exterior wall panel to the building structure for a single story of the multi-story building structure so that a plurality of the exterior wall panels are structurally coupled to each of multiple adjacent stories of the multi-story building structure; and

a plurality of elongate seismic decoupler joint means, each said joint means for flexibly coupling and providing the sole connection between the exterior wall panels on any one story to the exterior wall panels on an adjacent story of the multi-story building structure, each seismic decoupler joint means being mechanically interlocked to the exterior wall panels, the decoupler joint means permitting free in-plane, out-of-plane, and vertical interstory movement of the exterior wall panels on any one story relative to the exterior wall panels on an adjacent story of the multi-story building structure while remaining coupled to the exterior wall panels so that loads are not transferred between the exterior wall panels on any one story to the exterior wall panels on an adjacent story of the multi-story building structure if the building structure undergoes swaying motion.

35 (previously presented): The wall system of claim 34 wherein each elongate seismic decoupler joint means is removably securable between the exterior wall panels.

36 (previously presented): The wall system of claim 34 wherein each elongate seismic decoupler joint means comprises an elongate central portion connected between opposite elongate locking portions, the locking portions for connection to the exterior wall panels.

37 (currently amended): An earthquake-immune exterior ~~The wall system of~~
~~claim 36~~ for use with a multi-story building structure, the wall system comprising:

a plurality of exterior wall panels;

a plurality of structural connectors, each associated with one of the exterior wall panels for structurally coupling the associated exterior wall panel to the building structure for a single story of the multi-story building structure so that a plurality of the exterior wall panels are structurally coupled to each of multiple adjacent stories of the multi-story building structure; and

a plurality of elongate seismic decoupler joint means, each said joint means for flexibly coupling and providing the sole connection between the exterior wall panels on any one story to the exterior wall panels on an adjacent story of the multi-story building structure, the decoupler joint means permitting free in-plane, out-of-plane, and vertical interstory movement of the exterior wall panels on any one story relative to the exterior wall panels on an adjacent story of the multi-story building structure while remaining coupled to the exterior wall panels so that loads are not transferred between the exterior wall panels on any one story to the exterior wall panels on an adjacent story of the multi-story building structure if the building structure undergoes swaying motion, wherein each elongate seismic decoupler joint means comprises an elongate central portion connected between opposite elongate locking portions, the locking portions for connection to the exterior wall panels and wherein the central portion is generally flat in a natural state and is rolled into position to provide a U-shape between the exterior wall panels, in use.

38 (currently amended): An earthquake-immune exterior wall system for use with a multi-story building structure, the wall system comprising:

a plurality of exterior wall panels;

a plurality of structural connectors, each ~~operatively~~ associated with one of the exterior wall panels for structurally coupling the associated exterior wall panel to the building structure for a single story of the multi-story building structure so that a plurality of the exterior wall panels are structurally coupled to each of multiple adjacent stories of the multi-story building structure; and

a plurality of elongate, flexible seismic decoupler joints removably securable using a mechanical interlock to and comprising the sole connection between the exterior wall panels on any one story to the exterior wall panels on an adjacent story of the multi-story building structure, the decoupler joints permitting free in-plane, out-of-plane, and vertical interstory movement of the exterior wall panels on any one story relative to the exterior wall panels on an adjacent story of the multi-story building structure so that loads are not transferred between the exterior wall panels on any one story to the exterior wall panels on an adjacent story of the multi-story building structure if the building structure undergoes swaying motion.

39 (previously presented): The wall system of claim 38 wherein each elongate seismic decoupler joint comprises an elongate central portion connected between opposite elongate locking portions, the locking portions for connection to the exterior wall panels.